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the martlet

the university of victoria's independent newspaper

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Blood in the water

A plunge into the shark hunting industry

by Tim Harvey

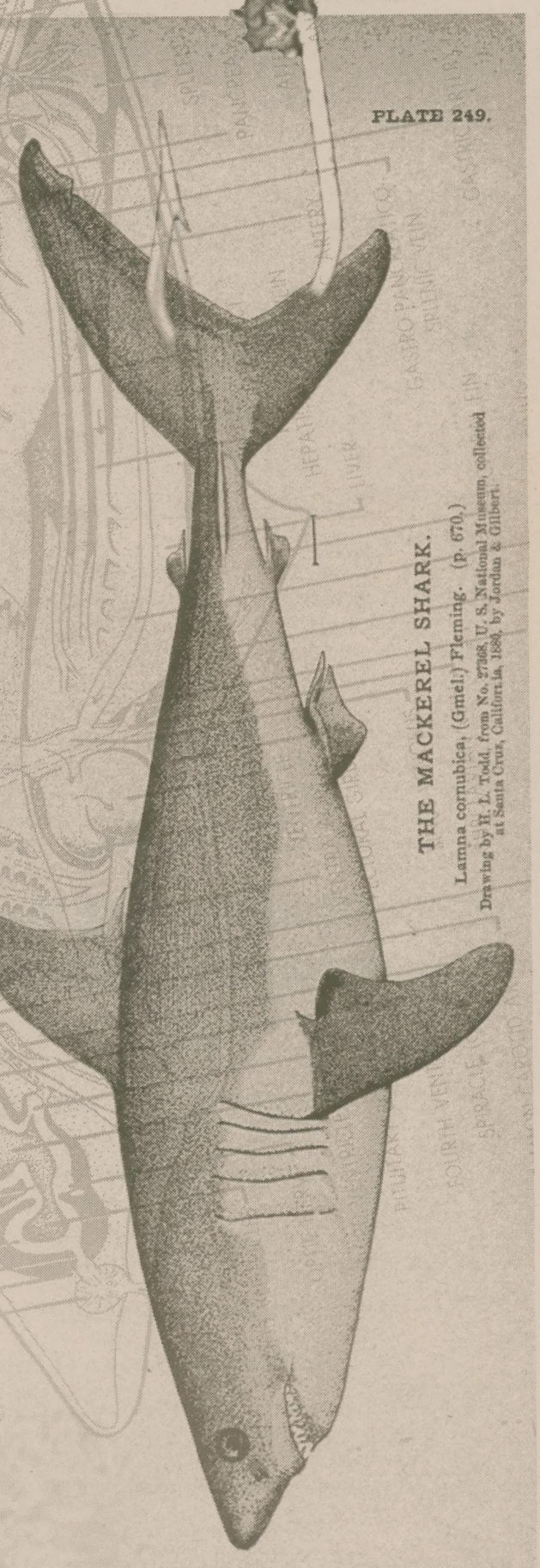
PLATE 249.
THE MACKEREL SHARK.
Lamna cornubica, (Gmel.) Fleming. (p. 670.)
Drawing by H. L. Todd, from No. 37368, U. S. National Museum, collected at Santa Cruz, California, 1880, by Jordan & Gilbert.

Makes cents to me:

UVic tuition fee survey

by Jeb Gordon, page two

Swimmers itch:

Cozying up to the PCS/Vikes

by Rich Cole, page eight

Playing God:

Getting geeky with *The Sims*

by Jess Hampton, page ten

Higher tuition fees don't limit access, study finds

But student union questions findings

by Jeb Gordon

A little-noticed study published on April 7, 2003 by the UVic Office for Institutional Analysis has created a bit of a stir with the University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS).

The Affordability and Access Study commissioned by Jamie Cassels, Vice-President Academic and Provost, was designed to examine the effect of tuition increases on UVic students.

It draws two conclusions that worry the UVSS. The first argues that the trend of students belonging to higher socioeconomic groups "cannot be attributed to tuition increases or even more general affordability issues."

The second conclusion states, "parents play a crucial role [in paying for a student's education] but scholarships, bursaries, loans, and employment income are also major contributors."

UVSS Chair Jude Coates said the fact most university students come from privileged backgrounds ignores how higher tuition fees prevent less-well-off students from applying to university.

"What about the people that never even applied to UVic? If they thought they couldn't afford it they just might not apply," she said. Her opinion was echoed around the UVSS Resource Centre, where student representatives asked how a study that only polled captured students could show the full picture.

The study did solicit responses from both UVic and non-UVic students that applied for admission in the fall of 2002. The non-arrivers who responded were mostly students who attended universities or colleges closer to their home. This led to the conclusion that "tuition fees at UVic were not a major deterrent to attending."

UVic students do incur a higher than average debt level when compared to other BC students. They also repay their debt at a lower rate than their provincial counterparts. This is one of the few points that both the UVSS and UVic agree upon. While the most recent data on student debt loads and repayment still comes from the period when the tuition freeze was in effect, Cassels points to "the fact that the majority of our students come from outside Victoria and may incur higher living and travel costs" as the major cost difference.

The study also points to parents paying for their children's education. In response, Coates said, "this option is just not open to all students. How can the study say everybody's family can pay for their tuition?"

Erik Haensel, UVSS Director of Academics, added another problem with the survey is that it focuses on first-year students coming to UVic directly from BC high schools. Since the study only looks at first-year students, "how can you apply this to all students?" asked Haensel.

Cassels acknowledged the study's shortcomings.

"I've been careful to emphasis the limitations of the study. It's only based on a few years' data so far, and it certainly doesn't purport to show that higher tuition is painless. Indeed, it shows that students may have to cut back on their discretionary spending and that about 17 per cent of our students are concerned that rising costs may delay their time to graduation or interfere with their ability to continue."

One of the odd statistics that showed up in the study was that 75 per cent of respondents said that scholarships or bursaries pay for a significant portion their first year expenses. The UVSS considers this number exceptionally high, but Cassels counters that, "The responses we got on this question show what other studies show – that students and their parents tend to over-estimate the amount of funds available from scholarships."

UVic is currently working on co-ordinating a similar study to be conducted among all BC universities and it plans to continue monitoring the effects of tuition increases.

The report is available on-line at web.uvic.ca/vpac/news/ Select the VPAC Access and Affo link.

UVSS fights for aboriginal rights

Changes to Indian Act opposed

by Mary Hughes

The UVic Students' Society (UVSS) has become one of the newest members in the fight to oppose the changes being made to the Indian Act.

Inside the Native Students' Union office at UVic, Wil George points to promises made on the federal government's Web site. It reads: "The Government made a promise to Canadians to pursue initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for Aboriginals. Among the commitments made was the improvement of governance structures for First Nations on reserves."

His disgust is evident.

"The government is abdicating its responsibilities to Native people," he says. As a member of both the UVSS and the Native Students' Union (NSU), George brought the motion to oppose the changes being made to the Indian act to the UVSS board of directors.

It's part of a national campaign organized by the Canadian Federation of Students with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), other first nations groups and the United Church.

Federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Robert Nault's sweeping changes include the introduction of the First Nation's Governance Act, along with changes to how claims resolutions and finances are structured.

The governance act, or FNGA, seems to be the one causing the most concern. It has already made it through one set of hearings and will be headed back for the second one soon.

The Progressive Conservative, Bloc Quebecois and the NDP parties all oppose the changes being made.

Time is the biggest obstacle the opposition faces as the Federal Government is trying to get all of the changes passed before they break for the summer.

"We support the NSU in advocating on behalf of the rights of Aboriginal People," says Jude Coates, chair of the UVSS. "We want to be supportive and pro-active in any way we can. This is an important issue. The proposed government legislation poses a real threat to the rights of Aboriginal people and ultimately affects the freedoms of us all."

The student union's involvement in the National Campaign includes letter writing, petition signing and bringing in guest speakers for presentations and workshops.

For more information, stop by the UVSS Resource Centre or the NSU.

photo by John Thompson

A housepost is raised outside the Student Union Building on Friday, June 13th by the UVSS graduation class of 2003.

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photo by Jeb Gordon

An excavator uproots trees adjacent to Ring Road on Thursday, June 12, to make way for a new residence dorm. "Those were landscape trees," said university spokesperson Patti Pitts. When the building is finished by September 2004, she said the university plans to plant 61 new trees of native species in their place.

Segway will "transform our lives"

Newfangled vehicle is high-tech, green and one of the first in Canada

by Stefan Carrie-Roberts

When Thomas Ahn heard about a $5,000 machine that transports you as fast as a galloping housecat, he knew he had to get one.

Ahn, who runs a hi-tech company out of Victoria, does have his reasons, and when the machine was made available to the public last year on Amazon.com, he made sure he was the first in Canada to get one.

The machine is a Segway HT (Human Transporter), a high-tech, two-wheeled gadget which looks like it's straight out of Matt Groening's Futurama. To use it you have to stand on a platform that sits between the wheels and hold a pair of handlebars at waist level. The machine, through a complex system of gyroscopes, balances itself. There's no gas pedal–to move you simply lean forward or backwards. The sensors in the platform are so sensitive it feels like the Segway has mind-reading abilities.

That's not all, as Ahn will attest to. The Segway runs on a 10 cent per-charge battery, making it a cheap and green technology. Ahn says it has been invaluable for saving fuel in travelling to his office from his home, which is somewhere between walking and driving distance.

Ahn begins to sound like a hi-tech prophet as he extols the virtues of a machine that he says will open up gateways for the disabled and "transform our lives." He considers himself something of an ambassador for the Segway, hoping that the attention he receives will help the hi-tech industry on Vancouver Island. Ahn mentions that one of the few other people in Canada to own a Segway is using it to raise $1.5 million in venture capital for his business by riding it from Ottawa to Toronto. No small feat considering the contraption has a top speed of 20 km/h and no suspension.

But despite all the futuristic glory of it, the machine had its drawbacks. Ahn admits the machine has no spare tires, although he admits he's been developing one since he renounced walking. He is now considering exercise to make up for it. Off-road it doesn't perform well either–the lack of suspension makes for a jarring ride, so Ahn is confined to the sidewalk. But being confined to a sidewalk may create another problem, since there is no legislation in most areas relating to the Segway. No one is really sure if it belongs on the road or off it. But Ahn says that, with only a handful of Segways being used in Canada, it hasn't been a problem yet.

So for now the rest of us continue walking, keeping our eyes on Thomas and his Segway, seeing if it will transform the world as we know it, or just be another very fun and expensive toy.

The first UVSS board meeting: A survivor's tale

by Mary Hughes

After three hours of watching the first UVSS meeting of the year, I'm convinced the only way out is to commit *hara-kiri* with my pen.

As a new Martlet reporter, I arrive at the meeting on the night of Thursday, May 22, wondering if this is what my editor considers hazing. I sneak into the room early, take a seat in a far corner, try to make myself as small as possible and flip open my journal.

I'm not the only new one here. The new Board of Directors (BOD) was elected last spring, and this is their first meeting. They're the ones who decide how student fees are spent, what campaigns the student union will endorse, and how the Student Union Building (SUB) is managed.

Jude Coates is serving as chair for the first time. She seems kind of nervous, explaining how the meeting is going to be run and making changes as she goes. Giving her guidance is Rich Tones, the resource co-ordinator. Every once in a while he leans over to give Coates pointers. Or, when confusion arises over arcane matters of policy (which frequently does), he flips through a thick binder at light-speed to find the answer.

The beginning of the meeting flies by. Agenda items are moved to the next meeting or removed all together. Suddenly, Committee Vacancies looms up, and the real purpose of the meeting has come to light–to assign everyone lots of fancy titles.

The student union has lots of committees, from communications and campaigns to finance, and right now there are lots of vacant positions on them. So the bulk of the meeting is preoccupied with lots of motivations (why-I-should-get-the-position speeches) for these different spots on various committees.

It doesn't take long before people are openly yawning and holding whispered conversations. Finance Director Joanna Groves has taken off her shoes under the table and is scrunching her toes into the carpet. She's also making faces at me.

Next come the main motions, which sneak up on me. They move much faster than filling the committee vacancies, and the first topic comes and goes before I can write it down. Something about Julie Boyd being revoked from her position on the Transit and Parking Committee, I think. Scott Payne replaces her.

After that, Erik Haensel is unanimously voted to join a committee with the Faculty of Humanities to review how potential students are admitted by methods other than grades. My GPA should rise just from having to sit through this.

Next comes what I've been waiting for. *Martlet* Editor John Thompson has highlighted it on the agenda in bright yellow for me and marked it with an X. It is hard to mistake it for anything but a story idea.

Wil George, a director at large and Native Student Union (NSU) member, wants the student union to campaign with the NSU against recent changes made by the federal government to the Indian Act. This becomes a point of debate when Ian Saunders proposes an additional motion to move the item to the Political Action Committee and ask for the backing of the NSU. Soon, everyone is dragged into an argument about grammar, word use and semantics. Finally, the conversation breaks down when various members point out how questions and comments are only moving in circles.

By now, the meeting is taking so long that I'm beginning to worry that Mandy Prenger, who is eight months pregnant, will give birth before the meeting is over. In the end, the extra motion is denied and the council passes George's motion unanimously.

Discussing clubs and how much money they'll receive this summer is moved to the next council meeting. The next motion is brought forward.

Coates proposes that the UVSS pay $10 and join the Fair Vote Committee. More questions arise and the subject of how the committee runs is batted around for a long time. Finally, it too is passed and the BOD goes into an *in-camera* session.

That means everyone except the board gets kicked out. I'm just happy to be going.

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Fears of mad cow disease hit BC interior

Over the summer the Martlet will publish foreign dispatches from its writers abroad. This month, Patrick White tells of ranchers' BSE woes

by Patrick White

VANDERHOOF, BC — 75J looks pretty plain around the Vanderhoof area, where cows are five times more numerous than humans. She is brown with white spots, has something branded on her ass and is eating hay from the feeder in the middle of her pen. Her two-week old calf is wandering around the dusty pen showing little concern for the cow patties surrounding him. At the approach of humans the cute little bull spooks and runs for familiar nipples.

He's probably too young to be worried by recent newspaper headlines. They tell of a disease infecting cattle like this cute little guy that creates holes in the brain and gradually turns a normally functioning bovine brain into a spongy, dysfunctional mass.

Even if this calf has the dreaded Bovine Spungiform Encephalopathy (not Encephalitis as reported elsewhere) the disease wouldn't begin supplying his brain cells with abnormal proteins for another four to seven years. It would start in his stomach and over the course of those years work its debilitating way up his vegas nerve to his medulla oblongata. That's when – according to defenders of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency – he would be slaughtered and tested before ever entering the food chain. But the progression of BSE, like so many other facets of this disease, is something of a mystery. The only tests to determine the progression of BSE have been conducted on hamsters.

In this country BSE is an anomaly, but a related condition in elk – Chronic Wasting Disease – has been a present since 2001 in elk and deer populations in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

A licking cow is an angry cow. A "mad cow," if you will.

Teresa Cook, a veterinary student from the Vanderhoof area, worked with CWD-infected herds in Saskatchewan. She took part in the euthanization of over 8,300 animals to prevent the spread of the disease and has removed the medulla oblongata from animals for testing. "It was a real surprise when it first came up. And it all came from a single bull elk shipped from the US." The site of the confirmed BSE cow was in close proximity to a confirmed CWD elk in northern Alberta, prompting speculation that the disease was transmitted between elk and cow herds. Most scientists regard this as unlikely, but CWD did first originate after elk herds came in close contact with sheep herds infected with scrapie, a condition similar to both CWD and BSE. If Cook is right, the US may just be the root of Canada's BSE woes, not just those to do with a closed border.

The owner of 75J and the rest of her herd, Ron Stephen, hops in the pen, waves his arms, yells and works his way toward a scared-looking cow named 67H, according to her ear tag. She looks at him out of one eye, then turns and looks at him with the other to verify his presence. She's alone in a corner. The rest of the herd have deserted her for the opposite end of the pen. 67H is boxed-in and, despite her weight of over 1,500 pounds, it doesn't occur to her to simply run over the smallish Stephen. This is the irrationality that has infected all cows since time immemorial.

Stephen looks closely at 67H's back end and pronounces, "Ah, it should be fine. She shouldn't have any problem." 67H had stitches in her rear end last year. She ripped open while giving birth to her calf. Some quick surgery saved her life and now Ron is worried whether or not he should have slaughtered her last year rather than go through the headache of another messy pregnancy.

There is a quarantined ranch near here where contaminated feed from Canada's most famous cow was sent and a number of cows were subsequently slaughtered. With so much else going on around the farm to keep them busy, neither Stephen, nor 67H, have time to consider this potential fate. Stephen knows the beef market is at a standstill, but he is retired and less worried than the larger farms and feedlots surrounding him – some have lost tens of thousands in potential earnings in recent days.

Cook can't alleviate the fears of these ranchers. She admits BSE can go anywhere from here. "We may never see it here again, or we may find more positive cases tomorrow. No one really knows. It's a one in a million disease that will probably keep popping up no matter what we do."

Jaded with the Giants:

My Dragon Bones Experience

by Jess Hampton

At noon, the air was already thick and balmy as my friend and I made our way into downtown Victoria. I began to squirm in my sweater. We were on a date, taking a half-hour walk from our home to the Royal BC Museum to see its current exhibit, "Dragon Bones." Halfway there, and already completely covered in a layer of sweat. I wished we had taken the car.

I was a "dinosaur kid." I spent a large chunk of my childhood collecting a vast array of dino goods – illustrated books, jigsaw puzzles and even a blue plush dimetrodon. I am 24 now, and whatever awe and curiosity I had towards dinosaurs has lessened to the point of mild interest. It's part of that unfortunate but usually unavoidable process – grow up, get boring.

But when we arrived I felt something like a child's excitement – fleeting, but still there. Real dinosaur skeletons?! As we waited in line for tickets, I anticipated the awe that would overcome me when I saw the bones. Even when our two-for-one coupon was denied (it was past its expiration date) I remained optimistic. Up the escalator, just a few minutes away, were the bones of childhood memories – reconstructed, held together with pins and wire. They were real.

We navigated our way towards the exhibit, shimmying through knots of kids being herded downstairs by sweating tour guides and parents. A beaming woman was renting headsets meant to guide the timid museum-goer through the eras at a regulated pace. We opted for no headsets (so we could bypass the boring stuff quickly) and handed the gatekeeper our tickets. In we went.

We separated immediately, without realizing it. Alone, I navigated my way around the foyer to the rumbling coos and roars being played through the speaker system. I spent about a minute or so at each introductory plaque, skimming. I realized that I was already getting bored, and this worried me. I knew that if I didn't get to the good stuff fast, I would lose that faint giddiness that I had felt earlier. I wondered if my friend felt the same. We'd go to continue our date (now turning out to be more of a solo thing) elsewhere, two jaded twentysomethings, so cold and shallow that we can't even squeeze a drop of enrichment out of these millions-of-years-old bones. Screw that, I thought. We're going to see real dinosaurs. We're going to love it, and be enlightened, reclaim our respective childhoods, all that stuff. We had to.

As soon as I entered the skeleton room I was jostled and nearly knocked down by an oblivious man with a camera the size of a VCR around his neck. As he walked away (still oblivious), I noticed what he had been blocking from view: a real chunk of dinosaur bone, there for the touching. It looked like a piece of wood. My date appeared from nowhere: "Want to touch a real dinosaur?" I hesitated. For a moment, my hand hovered, the surface of the bone buzzing just an inch or so beneath it. A familiar feeling washed over me – no, I don't want to touch it, there have been too many hands on it already. I pictured it being stroked, prodded, caressed. Licked, even. My hand recoiled. A woman appeared beside us and immediately laid her hand upon the chunk. I watched her face as she did it. She looked earnest, intent on milking something from this bone – maybe the same essence I was hoping for earlier.

We continued making our way through the exhibit, perhaps more quickly than was appropriate. Even the tiny-headed bellusaurus ("beautiful lizard") didn't hold me for too long. I felt alienated, as though I was excluded from a sort of obligatory awestruck state that held everyone else at the show. Yes, the skeletons were real – and damn, they were old. I didn't care – and that made me feel really, really bad. Children smacked each other with shovels at the "dinosaur dig" activity center. We made an arcing shortcut around them, towards the exit and gift shop.

I bought a small stuffed dinosaur. In reflection, I can see why. I suppose it was to commemorate something that might have happened, but didn't. It was to assuage the guilt that I felt in feeling underwhelmed by the skeletons. It was to replace that one I had as a child, maybe–which, by the way, I long ago gave to an ex-boyfriend in a manic fit of generosity. It's sitting in front of me as I write–green and furry, with plastic, infinitely forgiving eyes.

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The Martlet publishes monthly through the summer. Will you come and play with us in the basement? We have nothing but time and love to give you. Yes we do. Time, love and hard-copy to edit.

Pick your paranoia

We're surrounded by dangers.

Whether it's mosquitoes with West Nile virus, mad cows with BSE, or the even madder political representatives, corrupt corporate CEOs and the other fevered egos tainting our collective unconscious, there seems to be a threat around every corner nowadays.

Even those bunnies on campus have awfully sharp looking teeth. Oh, and let's not forget terrorism.

Okay, so real perils do exist. Our lives could be snuffed out at any moment, but it's more likely to happen from a car crash–especially considering how people drive in Victoria–than by the latest media-savvy disease. But the threats we hear about in the news are usually determined by whatever is new, exotic and deadly. This distorts public fears.

Statisticians comfort us with numbers. Don't worry, we're told: you're far more likely to die from drowning in the bath, tripping down the stairs or listening to too much Britney Spears. But somehow it's all a small comfort.

Meanwhile, new deadly threats emerge. Last summer it was killer tree fungus growing in Rathtrever provincial park. This summer we have a few more options, that's all. Would you like SARS, or mad cow with that?

That's not to say that fanning the flames of fear doesn't serve a purpose. While crime rates have fallen over the past several decades, public fears of crime have risen. It's what muckraker Michael Moore describes as a "culture of fear" that goads the public into buying into conservative policies.

Ever since two aircraft collided with the World Trade Centre on September 11th, 2001, many Canadians and our neighbours across the border seem happy to trade our civil liberties for peace of mind from terrorist threats. These fears not only breed xenophobia and intolerance towards people from the Middle East, they make us lose sight of our ideals of a free and tolerant society. This would never happen unless people were afraid.

So maybe SARS, deadly mosquitoes and mad cows have more to do with how we perceive ourselves, and our vulnerabilities, than they do with the last wave of cheesy disaster films. When we confront our fears, we should ask if we abandon our ideals in the process.

We should also ask what's worth being afraid of. Odds are, some of the financial contributors of Paul Martin are scarier than the latest gang of media-savvy viruses. They're also a lot more likely to affect our lives.

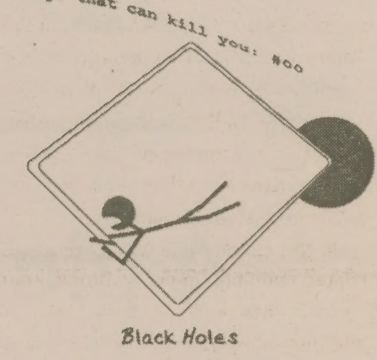
If these sorts of questions were asked, maybe media fear-mongering could play a useful role. When we consider how frail and fallible our lives are, it can be a keen reminder not to be such bastards to each other.

Here's to hope, anyhow.

Editorial topics are decided by staff at editorial meetings. Editorials are written by one or more staff members, and are not necessarily the opinion of all staff members.

Things that can kill you:

by Graham Stark



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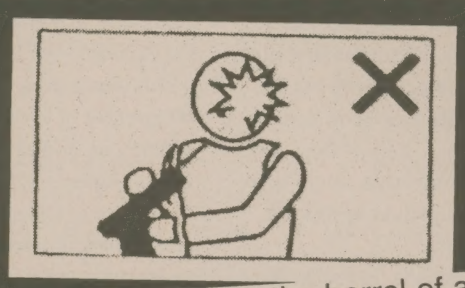
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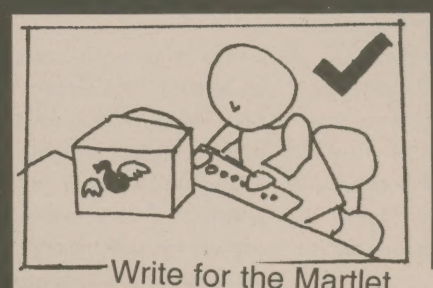
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Blood in the water:

A plunge into the shark hunting industry reveals many species at risk

story and photos by Tim Harvey

I've fallen off a boat two miles from the Caribbean island of Utila, Honduras, and I'm bobbing in a boiling sea. The boil is a frenzy of tuna feeding at the centre of a concentrated open-water ecosystem. Fishermen, dolphins and pelicans frequent tuna boils, as well as rays and sharks, members of the non-bony sub-class of fish made fearsome by *Jaws*. I know that I share this boil with one very large shark, which is why I fell from the boat in the first place.

The boat is the Wall Nut, from one of the shops that make Utila the least expensive scuba diving destination in the world. Moments ago, I was seated alongside about 15 divers on the Wall Nut's port gunwale, in fins and a snorkel mask. I was a naïve rookie to the modern Utilian ritual of shark-jumping, and I was eager with anticipation. Captain Swen, who once was a deckhand on the freighters that run raw logs from BC to Japan, was on the lookout for shark fins among the jumping tuna. A team of dive instructors stood on the Wall Nut's roof and bow, scanning the boil for the slow-moving shadow of a our target species, the whale shark. Manta rays glided by, but we didn't jump; we even spotted the whale shark more than once, but the call to jump only comes when we're all but guaranteed a swim alongside Utila's biggest tourist attraction. I was staring into the sea when the boat lurched forward, a wave grabbed my foot, and pulled me into the blue.

So now I await rescue amid the jumping tuna, 20 metres from where a tangle of 14 swimmers have entered the boil. I plunge my mask into the aquatic world, hoping to view a tuna in pursuit of its meal. But ghosting into visibility is no mere tuna. It is the visage of a whale shark, with a wide-open mouth as large as my body. It swims straight at me; I see only the immense head: a broad, flat snout, eyes four feet apart, and catch-all mouth in symmetry, as I come face to face with the biggest fish in the world.

It looms towards me with wide swishes of a powerful tail, then senses my presence and veers downward to reveal a psychedelic starlight pattern on its dorsal side. It sends me the message that I'm a creature it would rather avoid, but I swim down to intercept its hulking, bus-sized body. I am close enough to see its scars and the plastic harness of a washed-away satellite tag, barbed into skin like 200-grit sandpaper. For a few surreal moments, tons of shark slide past me, ominously slow, until I need air and must rise. The shark disappears into darkness.

As I break the surface, I realise that by imposing myself on the gentle giant, I made an ass of myself, if not my species. I violated the desire for privacy of a relic of the dinosaur age, an elder among earthly beings. Thank God nobody saw me.

❖❖❖

Rhincodon typus' problems finding privacy are a recent development. The species was unknown to Western science until brought ashore in Table Bay, South Africa in 1838, and by 1986 only 320 sightings were recorded in scientific literature. Even today it remains a mystery whether the migratory whale shark exists as a single global population. Scientists won't hazard a guess at their numbers, but words like "rare" and "vulnerable" are used for this plankton-feeding, open-ocean shark that reaches lengths of 20 metres and ages of 60 to 100 years.

It's hard to imagine careful science being carried out around Utila. The island is the hip ghetto of diving destinations that caters to a budget crowd of travellers who party late at clubs lining the oceanfront docks. The hub of Utila's nightlife is the Coco Loco, and it's at that bar, through the blur of my own descending inebriation that I first hear the name of Dr. Alex Antoniou. I've been absorbing the thesis of Utila's dive medic, about the problems of mixing booze, peer pressure and scuba gear, when I raise the question of whale sharks. He tells me, "There's one person who knows more about whale sharks than the rest of us together. That's Dr. Antoniou."

Antoniou heads up Project Whale Shark of the Shark Research Institute of Princeton, New Jersey. He is an avid diver who spends time each year off Utila's north shore, as well the Galapagos and the Seychelles, mostly spear-gunning whale sharks with satellite tracking tags. When I catch him by phone at his Princeton office he argues that a passion that swimming with whale sharks could be the best thing for an animal facing uncertain times.

In places like Utila, the Galapagos Islands and western Australia, whale sharks are predictable and support a young, growing tourism industry. Since the mid-nineties their popularity has also soared in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, but as no mere aquatic diversion. Rather, they are dinner for an urban elite that views eating shark meat or fin soup as an affirmation of superior class status.

But as Antoniou expains, the fishermen of Utila can't bring themselves to eat the stuff. "A few years ago, a Utilian fisherman snared a whale shark and brought it ashore, thinking he would earn loads of money off a single fish. But no one wanted to buy it. The meat was tasteless and had a spongy consistency. So it didn't sell, and that was the end of the whale shark fishery in Utila."

Still, the Asian elite's taste for shark meat fuels an aggressive whale shark fishery in much of the tropical world, despite international conservation efforts. In August 2002, the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), listed the whale shark as vulnerable and adopted a plan to regulate the fishery at an international level. But Taiwan, the biggest consumer of whale shark, has not signed the convention.

This doesn't sit well with Antoniou. "Taiwan continues to catch them in the open ocean and there is no regulation whatsoever. The Taiwanese fishing fleet is one of the biggest in the world, and the world's biggest culprit of finning, the practice of removing valuable shark fins and throwing the carcass back to sea."

Antoniou describes a species buckling under the pressure of over-exploitation. In the mid 1990s, Taiwan caught about 270 whale sharks each season. By 2001, the catch was down to 71. More disturbingly, the average shark brought in by the fishery was too young to breed. According to a Phillipine speaker at the 2002 CITES meeting in Santiago, Chile, in the late 1990s whale shark populations declined by up to 48 per cent in India, 70 per cent in the Philippines, and as much as 99 per cent in South African waters.

In spite of falling populations, the number of whale shark fins sold in Taiwan markets have increased steadily, retailing at $500 for a set of four dried fins. How do they meet the demand? Antoniou said that to the Taiwan industry approaches fishermen in poor villages near a whale shark resource, to convince them with ready cash to target the species. In 1999, just three villages in India provided over 1,000 whale sharks to the Taiwanese market.

While the industrialized Taiwanese fleet uses harpoons, most whale shark fishing in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean is done by fishermen who lunge onto the back a whale shark with a steel hook to plunge in its flesh, by hand. During the ensuing struggle they sever the shark's spine by knife to make it more docile. Towlines are then hooked to the mandible and the dying animal is slowly pulled to shore.

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In the sleepy port of Acajutla, El Salvador, any shark species that will bite a baited hook is processed for the still-surging global fin trade. Located 55 kilometres southeast of Guatemala on the Pacific coast, the Acajutla docks are quiet until the low-tech shark fleet ignites activity at 3:00 every afternoon. Three-man crews return to port after one or two nights almost 100 nautical miles offshore, in 20-foot open boats called lanchas. They come in loaded with sharks and sometimes non-target species like sea turtles or fish such as the metallic, blunt-faced dorado.

As lanchas pull up to the Acajutla docks, hooks are lowered and sharks are heaved up by hand. Species with local names like Volador, Zapato and Gambuso are carved into separate piles of meat, heads, viscera and most importantly, valuable baskets of carefully amputated fins.

Tito Luis is an Acajutla fisherman who first went to sea with his father at the age of six. He guesses that he is now about 35 years old but looks 50, weather-beaten by wind and booze. He has seen the shark industry go "from bad to worse" and he blames the industrial fleet that uses power winches to pull in lines of up to 9,000 baited hooks, while artisanal fishermen are

muscles and as much fuel their small boats can carry. Luis is unclear why the fins are worth so much money.

"Some say it's the gringos who eat them, and others say it's for the fibres, to make other products. Who knows which is true." Crouched before a pile of shark heads to be used as crab bait, Luis says that each day at four o'clock a buyer arrives for the fins. When the transaction occurs, it happens so quietly I almost miss the event altogether. A stout Salvadoran woman is just entering a truck with a basket of fins when I catch up, and she shows little inclination to chat with the curious, camera-wielding white guy.

Where do the fins go, I ask. "To a buyer." Who is that? "A man in the city." How much did you just pay the fishermen? Surprisingly, she shows me a table listing prices according to species and fin length. An impossibly-large fin of the rare dusky shark, the table stipulates, is worth US $130, while four-centimetre fins from a hammerhead are only worth $2. The most common fin prices are in the $30 range. Yet the most telling detail is the date stamped on the table: February 2000. In three years, despite increased pressure on dwindling shark populations and a growing demand for fins, the table has not been updated. Among Acajutla's fishermen, "la Tabla" is an accepted authority, even to those who can read.

In the August 2002 issue of *Skin Diver Magazine*, Jean-Michel Cousteau laments that the annual global kill of over 200 million sharks is eliminating top predators that play an important ecological role in the world's oceans. Artisanal fisheries like Acajutla's don't even keep records, so Cousteau expects this number is conservative. He charges that conventions like CITES are unenforceable, and that a growing number of

are either critically threatened or endangered. According to Cousteau, "when it comes to collecting census data on sharks – the necessary prelude to real protection – there is no movement."

In the case of the whale shark, at least, there is such a movement; Australia and Belize both have research teams, and no group has placed more satellite tags or collected more tissue samples than Dr. Antoniou's Project Whale Shark. And while protecting most sharks can be a tough sell due to their reputation as savage killers, whale sharks are gaining notoriety as a thrilling attraction for snorkellers. The Honduran government recently banned whale shark fishing, in response to Antoniou's argument that the sharks represent a valuable living resource. Achieving this was a "pre-emptive strike," he said, since he anticipates the Taiwanese will soon be courting Honduran fishermen.

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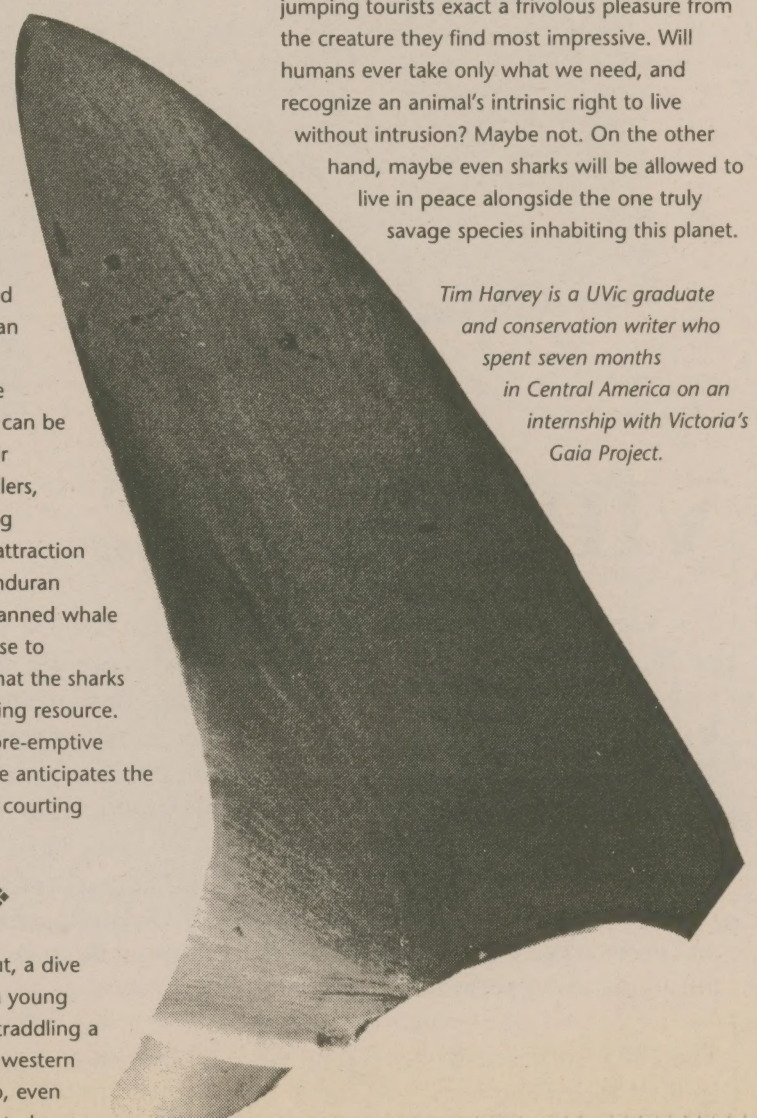
Back on the Wall Nut, a dive instructor reprimands a young European woman for straddling a whale shark's tail like a western cowgirl riding a bronco, even

her behind. It also left its plankton food at the surface, and a boatload of tourists awaiting its return. Much like shark fin soup connoisseurs (though to a less destructive degree), shark-jumping tourists exact a frivolous pleasure from the creature they find most impressive. Will humans ever take only what we need, and recognize an animal's intrinsic right to live without intrusion? Maybe not. On the other hand, maybe even sharks will be allowed to live in peace alongside the one truly savage species inhabiting this planet.

Tim Harvey is a UVic graduate and conservation writer who spent seven months in Central America on an internship with Victoria's Gaia Project.



Swimmer's Itch:

PCS/Vikes count summer-time as training-time

by Rich Cole

VANCOUVER—Instead of spending their off-season eating pogo sticks and getting sunburns at the beach, the top Vikes swimmers are active with their UVic affiliate club, Pacific Coast Swimming (PCS). The PCS/Vikes pulled off some impressive finishes against a slew of top international racers on the weekend of May 30 at the UBC pool.

Here are the top 3 highlights:

1. Jesse Jacks defended his national title with gold in the 200 Fly.

2. Up and comer David Creel placed an impressive second place in the 1500 Free behind Olympian and former Vike Rick Say.

3. Female distance specialist Karley Stutzel notched bronze in the Women's 1500.

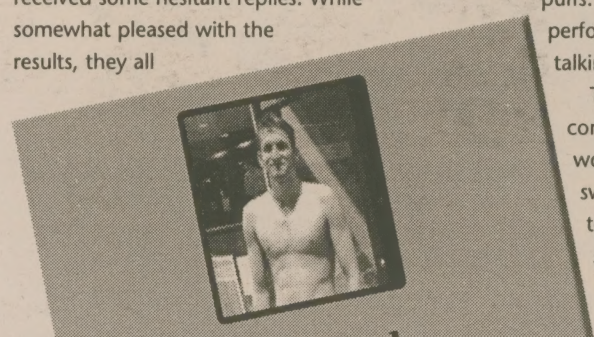
With those great results one would think that the PCS/Vikes swimmers would be pumped with their performances. Not quite. When I asked the athletes about their races, I received some hesitant replies. While somewhat pleased with the results, they all shared the same comment: "there's room for improvement."

Even veteran John Stamhuis, who placed top five in the 200 breaststroke, did not seem overly-confident. When asked about his race, Stamhuis joked and said, "on the ferry I made ten bucks by eating 20 cream puffs. That's the only performance worth talking about."

The hesitant comments lead me to wonder why the swimmers were so tense. Athletes are supposed to be cocky. What was the matter with the Victoria swimmers? Did I smell bad or something? After testing negative for a pit-sniff check I decided to surf the web and see what I could dig up. It wasn't long before I pulled up sites listing that the Pan-am games and World Championship games trials were just a few weeks away and being held in Victoria. It's playoff season. That's why the PCS/Vikes aren't about to do some faux-pas bragging and get all overconfident like the washed-up LA Lakers.

Qualifying at the Pan-Am/World Champ trials could prove to be invaluable for the PCS/Vikes swimmers. On the cusp of next year's Olympics this is one of the last chances for the athletes to go up against their competitors. While the Victoria swimmers had some impressive finishes at the UBC meet, they know the most important race of their lives is at the trials only a few weeks away. The pressure is on and the Victoria swimmers are staying mentally focused and swimming fast.

Go cheer on your hometown PCS/Vikes at the Pan-Am/World Champ trials held at the Commonwealth pool from June 26-30. Here's who to watch:



David Creel
Age: 21
UVic Major: Fine Arts
Events: Distance Free and Individual Medley
Dave recently placed 11th at
2002 World Open Water champs.

Danielle Bell
Hometown: Victoria
Age: 19
Events: 400 Free, 800 Free
UVic major: Psychology
Best swimming memory: "Most training camps."
Why she swims:
"I love the feel of water and finishing a race
I can be really proud of."
Danielle placed 7th at 2002 Commonwealth games

Christin Petelski
(Vikes alumni)
Hometown: Nanaimo
Age: 25
Events: Breaststroke and 4X100 Relay
Christin Placed 6th in 2000
and 8th at 1996 Olympic Games
Note: Photo may have been altered
for "special" purposes

Jesse Jacks
Hometown: Victoria
Age: 21
Events: 200 Fly, 100 Fly
UVic Major: Sociology
Best swimming moment:
"Winning 2002 Summer Nationals
in front of my hometown in the 200 Fly."
Why he swims:
"I love the feeling of accomplishment
when I achieve my goals...
and the improvement that I work hard to attain."

Karley Stutzel
Hometown: Victoria
Age: 21
Events: Distance Free
but favorite would be 200 Breast.
UVic major: "Oh god, do we have to go there?
I guess I'll be applying to Biology next year."
Best swimming moment:
"The moment I saw Rich Cole walk out
on to the deck at McKinnon...I truly don't know
how to put it into words...Also coming 4th at
the 2001 Worlds in the 10km."
What Karley thinks about while racing:
"That's a tough one to answer...
let's go with a big shark chasing me."

Dave MacDonald
Retired UVic Swimmer
(but too young for the Safeway senior discount)
Hometown: somewhere in Southern Ontario
UVic major: Commerce
(with a minor in mechanical bull riding)
Position at meet:
Director of Moral Support and Liver Enrichment

Laina Steeple
Hometown: Delta
Age:19
Events:100 Back, 200 Back
UVic major: Biology
Best swimming moment:
"Winning my first medal in the 50 breaststroke
at my first provincial meet when I was 9."
Why she swims:
"Keep in shape, meet people and travel.
I like the feeling of accomplishing my goals."

John Stamhuis
(Vikes alumni)
Hometown: Victoria
Age: 24
Events: 100, 200 Breaststroke, 200, 400
Individual Medley
UVic major: Education (PE, English)
Best swimming moment: "7th Place finish 2003
Pan Pacific Championships."
Interesting Fact:
John made an extraordinary comeback
from a near fatal fall off a cliff.
"Now simply grateful to be able to compete,"
John is back with more drive than ever and placed
9th at the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

VIPIRG *Refund Period*

The Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) is a student run non-profit organization dedicated to research and action for social and environmental justice. Our resource library loans thousands of items to students every year. Our Research Internship Program enables students and community groups to work together for course credit. Other VIPIRG projects include promoting urban agriculture, successfully lobbying for a low-cost dental clinic, being a vocal participant in the anti-war effort, providing a prominent voice against cuts to Income Assistance in BC, and recently releasing the report *Ripple Effects: the Need to Assess the Impacts of Cruise Ships in Victoria B.C.* Every UVIC student is a member of VIPIRG. Undergrads pay 3$ per full time semester and grads pay 2$ per full time semester through their student fees. This fee is refundable during a refund period each semester.

The 2003 Spring semester refund period will be held **June 30th, 2003 – July 11th, 2003**. Refund forms can be picked up at the VIPIRG offices in SUB B120-122. Info: 472-4558.

White Pants?

Fashion secrets revealed by Victoria's own Fuck Me USA

by Vanessa Neuman

Fuck Me U.S.A. should consider themselves one fortunate band.

Normally they would need at least a demo before being picked up by a label. But the Victoria four-piece will have no such thing when they go in to the studio in July to record their debut album set to come out on Global Symphonic some time around the end of the summer.

They are, to say the least, pleased, especially since their fellow label-mates include Vancouver's The Organ and our very own Frog Eyes – bands with sounds that FMUSA really admires, and feels are of a similar style.

The interview doesn't really start until keyboardist Jay Watts finds himself a suitable place to sit. He's wearing white pants, and he's a little concerned the benches and patio chairs we find outside the 50/50 Arts Collective are dusty from their proximity to the gravel parking lot. He looks very stylish and appropriate for summer and our unseasonably warm weather.

"I do have a whole white outfit, although I would like to mention that it did precede the article that was in the *Globe and Mail*, which was all about white. People are afraid of white because they feel that it's high maintenance. You have to watch where you sit and where you wipe your hands. [Hot Hot Heat's] Steve Bays actually told me tonight that a good idea is to wipe your hands on your socks. It makes sense. That's the most disposable part of your ensemble. No one is going to see if you have dirty socks, and they're not going to think that's what you're doing. They'll just think that you're pulling them up."

photos by Vanessa Neuman

This is very true, although now that the secret is out, dirty socks might be a bit more difficult to pull off. So, any more secrets that the boys from Fuck Me USA can spill?

Well, along with the album there is also rumor of a possible Fuck Me U.S.A./A Luna Red split album in the works although it will probably be coming out some time after the album.

"I think it's kind of dependent on whether we can pull the album off," laughs Jay. He seems confident in the band's ability to produce a good recording, but also realizes that, for the label, they are a bit of a gamble. A recently formed group (FMUSA was created in the winter of 2002) with nothing recorded could be a little worrisome to record execs, so it's especially cool that they have got this deal.

I myself am a little uncertain as to the future of the band when it is mentioned that Jay will be moving to Vancouver in July and that singer Kayla Guthrie will be joining him soon after.

"We (Dan Colussi and I) will be starting a wicked side project," jokes drummer Brad McKinnon when asked what will happen to the two members who are being left behind, "but [really] we're all trying to stay positive about it. It's totally going to work. We've been talking about moving there eventually."

Based on the fact that they seem very committed on staying together and that all four of them will already be spending lots of time in Vancouver recording this summer I don't doubt that FMUSA is going to survive the upcoming separation. Despite having been around for less than a year, FMUSA sounds impressively tight, and their mixture of synthesizer, vocals, bass, drums and energy fits exactly with the style of new wave that is quickly gaining popularity everywhere. Bands like The Rapture have already started to become more well known and the trend is still going strong.

So, it looks like we're set to lose another band to the big, bad city of Vancouver. Unfortunate, but it is bound to happen sometimes. Thankfully they're not gone quite yet and so for now the members of Fuck Me USA are chillin' island-style. They'll be playing some shows in the next few months and undoubtedly perfecting their repertoire for the upcoming studio sessions. Make sure you catch them while you can.

Fuck Me USA plays Logan's Pub with Radio Berlin on June 27.
Cover is $5.

The dense metal of Morally Sound

by Andrew MacRae

photo provided

Men without hate: Morally Sound strive towards a common musical goal.

To some, being Morally Sound in a death metal world may seem to be an entertaining prospect, but though the genre is clouded with black lipstick, hair-dye, and leather, the Saskatoon trio is just here to play music.

The band consists of Kris Klyne on vocals and guitar, Armand Pinel on drums, and Andee Dahlen on bass – who impressively learned each and every one of their songs in one day after their old bassist got the boot.

"Most of our songs are based on personal experiences," says drummer Armand Pinel when asked about the motivations behind the lyrics. Although they may aptly be described as "moderately ill-tempered," Armand doesn't believe the messages are negative because they deal with how to act responsibly in the presence of negativity, rather than screaming like a girl or Fred Durst.

The trio's new album, "The Hatred Left Behind" is an aggressive yet melodic step in the right direction according to Pinel. "Our last album was recorded in a basement. This time around we rented a studio in White Rock. We were really under the gun, and that forced us to learn a lot about working together... there was a conscious effort to condense each of the songs, which is hard. They're kind of like your babies."

Regardless of the acts of brutality the songs may have endured during the recording process, "The Hatred Left Behind" emerges as a steady stream of energy from start to finish.

The metal is dense, cleanly cut, and definitely heavy. It has the epic-sounding viking march of Metallica mixed with the robotic metal of Econoline Crush. Although the sound is not revolutionary, falling into several dozen metal clichés, "The Hatred Left Behind" manages to hold your attention to the bitter end.

Respectably, the album is not only useful for a daily supplement of testosterone, but is also ridden with humorous interludes and skits. These range from an Apollo landing involving two astronauts with Tourette Syndrome and a born-again Christian's monologue, just hours after his conversion.

The first track enters with a mock review quoting, "If you like this music, you must be mentally disturbed, and in my opinion you're more likely to commit murder or suicide just for listening." Depending on the audience, this may or may not be seen as reverse psychology.

As far as the future is concerned, Morally Sound remains fairly unconcerned. "We're really taking everything as it comes, if there's a crowd that wants to listen to us 20 years down the road, then we'll be there but I'm not going to pretend that it will last forever." If indeed, the year is 2023 and Morally Sound is opening for the Rolling Stones, I personally hope to ride my hover-board to the show.

Until then, Morally Sound is about to embark on a tour of Western Canada. "This tour is much more organized than others we have been on," says Pinel. "We're hoping to attract some record label attention this time." The tour hits Steamers pub this June 26.

In a genre notoriously ridden with fantasy, darkness, and escapism, Morally Sound seems to stick out as realistic and down to Earth. Armand recalls, "when we started out, it was painful. I wasn't into metal at all. I thought they were just weird and they thought the same about me. Now, where starting to have goals and plans as a band, were starting to come together. I don't know about 20 years down the road, but for now we'll just take it one album at a time and see where we end up."

And the Lord said, "thou shalt party down"

The Sims gratifies the control freak in us all

by Jess Hampton

The party at the Delaunay household Saturday night switched from playful chaos to downright mayhem around 12:30 AM.

Hugo, prone to violent outbursts due to his low 'nice meter,' exploded when he saw Bunny, the neighborhood flirt, making out with his live-in boyfriend Andreas near the bubble machine. A heated exchange of insults quickly turned to a slap-fight, and soon the two were locked in a cloud of screams and flailing limbs. The groovy atmosphere, however, remained unchanged – somewhere upstairs, a group of tipsy partygoers hooted as a scantily clad dancer jumped out of a cake. The mechanical bull whirred and gyrated as Samuel, Bunny's errant husband, practiced his DJ skills.

I watch this spectacle with a sort of detached glee and weigh my options. Is it time to kick out the mime? Send the caterer home? More and more of the partygoers seem to be getting tired, cranky, and bored.

Okay – I like to be in control. I'm playing *Sims*, and I've removed the 'free will' option. Before House Party, the second *Sims* expansion pack in a series of six, my *Sims* existed in a cushy but uneventful manner. Regular promotions and hefty cash advances aside, their waking hours were spent in tedium – watching television, painting, learning to cook. Now, as the above anecdote illustrates – they lead decidedly spicier lives.

I'll admit it. I've been obsessed with *Sims* since its introduction to society in 2000. It has done what many, many games could not: create infinite target audiences, and redefine computer gaming for an ever-changing consumer base. It could be the game of the millenium, but only because its many predecessors set the stage.

Prior to the release of *Sims*, two gaming genres that captured large portions of the market were role-play and simulation. Before the birth of Maxis (the company responsible for Sims – now a subsidiary of EA Games), there were few, if any, simulation games. Maxis created classic gems like *SimAnt, SimLife, SimFarm* and of course, *SimCity*. Those of us sick of the arcade/shoot-em-up games and the typical "I win, you lose" goal could find solace in the perpetual game play engine typical of these games. Maxis' *Sim* games provide uncomplicated interface and infinite outcomes to a player's labors. Would the city of Morrisseyville (I was 13, okay?) flourish? Or would it be destroyed by a nuclear meltdown?

Bunny and Andreas on the couch - only you will know (and decide) who leaves who hanging.

Role-playing games, as well, have tested the boundaries of computer gaming – from the text-based medieval and post-apocalyptic adventures of the early 1980s, to the recent fantasy epics *Baldur's Gate* and *Diablo*. They provide another easy outlet for players' fussy imaginations, with multi-faceted character creation tools and vast inventories of items to help create the ideal role-play experience – something that companies like Black Isle and Origin (*Ultima Series, Ultima Online*) have been perfecting for over two decades. There's something genuinely appealing about creating a character – choosing a name, appearance, and attributes – and letting him or her loose in an original, unique fantasy realm.

What's fantastic about *Sims* is that it effectively combines elements from simulation and role-playing genres. While the game is essentially a life-simulation, the minutely-detailed character creation process is very typical of the role-play genre – players not only determine the characters' appearances, but their personalities as well. Elements of role-play also surface. Through choices made by a player (or by a *Sim*, if 'free will' is selected), lives of *Sims* can go swimmingly – or end tragically. A *Sim* can build and furnish a home, get a job – and get fired – and yes, even die. Their moods are determined by a series of meters. If, for example, a *Sim's* bladder is full or its fun meter is down, it may not feel like going along with the player's wishes.

It's too bad that *Sims* didn't come about in the early 90s. Kids sick of entering 'god-mode' and passing Doom II in an hour could have had something more substantial to procrastinate with. There is no underwhelming climax with *Sims*. The game play is perpetual – sure, lives can fall apart, but if you've got the time, you can rebuild them again and again.

The Sims experience speaks to the voyeur and control freak in all of us – novelty and cuteness aside, it's still just a tool that enables us to exercise our wills over the tiny people we have created. Perhaps what really grabbed me about the game is not that the *Sims* are dancing, kissing, or fighting, but because it's me that is making them do so. With bevies of upgrades and internet downloads available, this game will be in constant, blissful flux – aging like a fine wine. I've never played anything like it.

Rooting for the machines: The Matrix Reloaded

by Gordon de Frane

I was invited to see The Matrix Reloaded the day after it was released two days early over the weekend—two days early. You know it must be bad if a studio has to get filmgoers in earlier then usual for a weekend release.

Normally I enjoy good film. I don't mind handing over 10 to 15 dollars to sit in the dark along with several hundred other people. Besides, I like Keanu Reeves. Keannu could eat dried fish in my canoe anytime.

So, with ticket in hand I passed up the 80 per cent mark-up popcorn and beverage and candies to find suitable seating. The way I see it, Hollywood already provides all the sugariness I need once the film starts rolling. Do you really need more sugary confections and buttery concoctions on the side?

The Matrix Reloaded proved to be a disappointment. Of course, I already felt that going in. It's kind of like going to see the Titanic: you can hope that maybe they won't strike the iceberg. Well, you can hope that what you've heard about The Matrix Reloaded isn't true. It isn't true even though you are there seated, in some of the most comfortable and unobstructed vision seats ever put into a cinema house, the lights have dimmed and the audience has fallen silent. You occasionally hear only the soft munching of popcorn drifting on the silent air before the trailers and advertisements begin rolling.

The Matrix Reloaded disappoints because it does not offer its audience anything new from The Matrix. It has lost connection with the philosophy that informed The Matrix. The Matrix depicted a world-view as expressed in philosophy: What if the world was created by an evil genius? If an evil genius was manipulating you and the world, would you even know it? But the subtle storylines and engaging dialogue of The Matrix is missing in Reloaded. There is no theme or driving concept on which the storyline is hung.

The downfall of The Matrix and Reloaded is the tired old storyline that love somehow conquers all. I must confess that in The Matrix much of it was predictable, but I was willing to make concessions in favour of the philosophy, hero/quest concepts and storyline and plot motivating behind the clichés. In Reloaded the characters are flat. There is no character development. Character development either gets you rooting for the hero or for something in the film. In Reloaded little empathy is created with the audience. You don't really care if the good guys succeed. I started to applaud the machines.

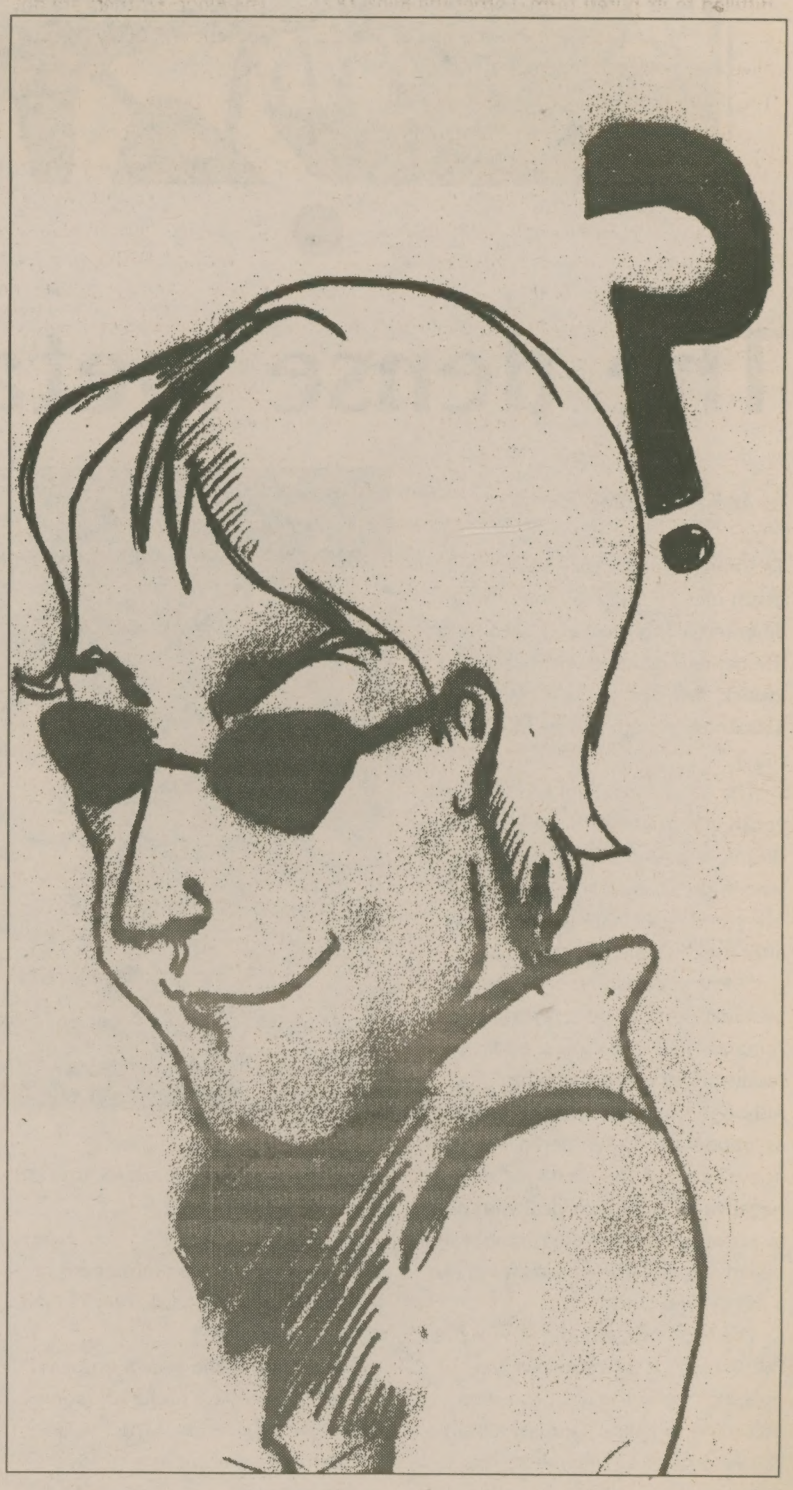
Reloaded is predictable. It never asks me to willing suspend reality. Sitting in the dark, I didn't even unwilling suspend reality. The dialogue gets preachy at times and enters into obscure pseudo words of wisdom and mystery. I began to lament that I did not visit the concession stand and get a sugar hit that way.

Even special effects could not support The Matrix Reloaded. Today's special effects are often designed more to distract from the bad cinematography and bad storyline of a bad film. Reloaded can't even disguise how bad it is with special effects. The use of special effects simply emulated those found in The Matrix—lots of pseudo martial arts scenes employed against invincible Matrix characters. I don't understand why Neo fights with indestructible villains.

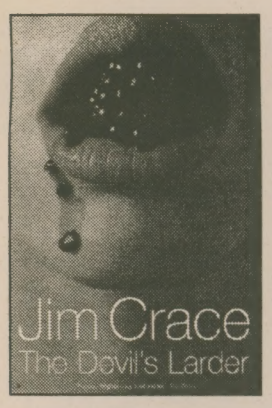
Neo has added "his superman thing". It's a shtick, leaping tall buildings in a single bound and stopping an array of bullets with a wave of the hand. He has added a cool faux-pontifical robe to his character. As I've said, Neo looks good. Whether he can act is another matter.

However, The Matrix Reloaded cannot even claim to be on the road to cult fame. It lost its Jungian archetypal colour and flavour. Sadly, I think it will just fall in with all the other mediocre film genres of its kind. If you see this film I recommend that you load up on the sugar and popcorn. At least that way you get a real high.

I can only hope that the machines actually do destroy Neo and Zion before the third film is completed.



Beauty before brains? Or is Neo just the "strong silent type"?



Hungry? *Devil's Larder* will sate desires

The Devil's Larder
Jim Crace
Penguin

by Vanessa Cervantes

Sex. Food. To anyone who has ever written sweet nothings on a lover's skin with liquid chocolate or indulged in a carton of Haagen Daz's 'Dulce de leche' ice cream while in the bath, the connection between these two is obvious.

Although I crave both, I have to agree with the majority of my female friends that in many ways chocolate is better than sex—not even sex touches one's life to the same degree that food does. Jim Crace's work The Devil's Larder focuses on the darker, edgier side of food. Why, he asks, are we in the western world so utterly consumed by food?

I first encountered Crace at the Manulife Financial Literary Arts Festival that was recently held in Victoria. He was absolutely magnetic. He is a lithe, dark man with an aura of mystery that was apparent to me even before he opened his mouth to address the audience. By the end of the reading, I was convinced that The Devil's Larder was a book that deserved to bypass the rest of the titles that I am hoping to read over the course of the summer. I was not to be disappointed with this book that The Times described as being "funny, frightening and erotic," with an emphasis on the word erotic.

I cannot heap enough glowing praise on this book—although I usually follow the old adage that one shouldn't judge a book by its cover, one glimpse of this particular cover reveals all that one needs to know about its contents. How can one not be attracted to it? Like its author, this book leaves the reader both wanting more and not understanding exactly what it is that we crave.

The book's ultimate destination is that place where our appetites for food and other sensual delights and necessities meet our collective humanity. Essentially, it is the politicisation of food. There are 64 courses in this meal—some are dark and twisted like a loaf of German rye bread while others are as light and fleeting as a spoonful of meringue on the tongue. All are equally satisfying.

My favourite chapter is one that Crace himself selected to read at the event, "Curry no. 3," which symbolizes the sex trade in Thailand—"it isn't done to ask what she will use for meat, although the boy is eyeing us and could be bribed with cigarettes, to talk. We simply have to take our chances…we are bound to contemplate, as well, the child who went astray at the weekend, the old man who has disappeared and is not missed, or the tourist who never made it back to her hotel; the sacrificed, the still born and the cadavers, the unaccounted for."

My advice to those adventurous enough to taste this literary creation? Savour each course slowly—allow the unique flavours of each to tempt your palate before you dig your fork back in.

Long live rock, roll and CD reviews! Music to head-bang and fall in love to

The Blood Brothers
…Burn, Piano Island, Burn
Artist Direct Records

by Sarah Petrescu

I have a confession. A great portion of my musical collection (all the hard and weird shit for sure) has been poached from my younger brother Nick's mercifully chaotic bedroom. Nick can always be especially relied upon to provide me, the hardcore ignoramus, with something unique and melodic enough to once again whet my appetite towards the underrated pleasures of rock, metal and depressing lyrics backed by energetic grindcore speed.

Enter The Blood Brothers with their first major label release …Burn, Piano Island, Burn. Volatile, sensitive and uncomfortably dynamic, Burn encompasses the beauty of punk-rock music distilled to its purest form. Forget the Blink 182 and Not By Choice raping of the genre, punk is alive and well (and ingeniously reinvented) with The Blood Brothers and *Burn*.

The Seattle quintet is the newly indoctrinated lovechild of what is dubbed the post-hardcore music era. Their musical influences are obvious (across the board), yet their fusion of seamless styles and fast punk sound make them incomparable to any of their peers. As Nick says, "They're so fucking full of energy—like At the Drive-In with Reversal of Man—but way more hardcore in parts."

The first track of *Burn*, "Guitarmy," is an appropriate intro to the heavy-handed guitar riffed sound of the band thanks to guitarist Cody Votolato. However, unlike many bands who mistake homogenous grind laced with wanking solos as guitar props, *Burn* uses intermittent moments of heavy riffing juxtaposed with rhythmic melodies and bouncy bass (Morgan Henderson) and drums (Mark Gajadhar) to showcase the entirety of the band's dynamic sound.

Perhaps the most exciting element of the band is its vocals, executed by both Johnny Whitney and Jordan Blilie. The screaming duo succeeds in off-setting any potential monotony by using each other for dynamics and energy-inducing vignettes of sound. This unique vocal element is further intensified by the fact that you can understand most of the bands morose, yet thoughtful and entertaining, lyrics.

Although the music is aggressive, meatheads The Blood Brothers are not. The pining lyrical content and eerily emotion-filled musical moments of *Burn* exemplify the band as sensitive sad boys with a yearning to rock and let off some heart trodden steam. Themes of death and decay permeate the album, yet a few love songs sneak in in disguise. My favorite song on *Burn* is the elegiac "I Know Where the Canaries and the Crows Go." With lyrics like "…Every car that passes on this crooked highway/ bears your face on its grill. Every headlight casts your shadow onto my open heart vigil," combined with hardcore melodies, the painful love song genre is pleasantly reborn.

Burn is one of those albums that scarcely comes along; one that you immediately like, but know you will grow to love for its ability to challenge and move you with uncomfortable and intriguing boundaries.

The White Stripes
Elephant
Third Man Records/ BMG

by Sarah Petrescu

A self-proclaimed elegy to the death of sweethearts, The White Stripes' latest album Elephant is chock full of drama, tough love and soap opera weirdness.

Okay, the story goes like this: Jack and Meg married, started a band, divorced, broke up, lied to the world saying they were brother and sister (hence the same last name, White), let the cat out of the bag and, most recently, recorded an album about love.

It would be more Springer-esque if the rock duo from Detroit weren't so damn well-adjusted and…well, good. Minus the creepy final track of the album, "Well It's True That We Love One Another," which features Jack, Meg and a woman who may be Jack's lover, the album is amazingly raw and hopeful about love.

This is one of the best albums I've heard in a long time. Call me a sucker or old-fashioned, but I love live-off-the-floor anything and go weak at the knees for eight-track recordings. When I read the note at the back of the album that states "No computers were used during the writing, recording, mixing or mastering of this record" I knew I was in for an experience akin to plodding through my dad's rock and roll record collection. And rock it is. *Elephant* borrows from the most lucid moments of classic rock while maintaining an emo edge that is all its own.

The best thing about *Elephant* is that no two songs sound the same. From the catchy riffing and thumping percussion on the first track "Seven Nation Army," the White duo proves that although they may only be two they have enough sound to power a rock army of their own.

Golden moments of the diverse album include the tongue-in-cheek love ballad of desperation "I Want to Be the Boy to Warm Your Mother's Heart" and the humorous homage to motivational speakers "Little Acorns." Drummer Meg takes an unconventional stab at the vocals on "In the Cold, Cold Night." Her airy child-like croon is enigmatic and soothing, especially in comparison to her hard-hitting percussion. Jack is undeniably the golden-boy of Elephant. His raw, yanking, raunchy blues style dominates the guitar driven sound of the group. Jack takes a pleasing go-fuck-yourself approach to revealing himself in his work. Both, lyrically and musically he is not afraid (maybe even proud) to wear his bleeding, pierced heart on his sleeve. And he does it well enough to make an album about love that is, although tortured, extremely hopeful and energy inducing.

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THE FESTIVAL FOR THE PEOPLE
SAT JULY 19TH AT THE VICTORIA CURLING CLUB:
(ALL AGES Beverage Garden w/ID. 7pm - 2am)
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK'S
THE SLACKERS
FROM MONTREAL
THE KINGPINS
THE LONG AWAITED RETURN OF
CHRIS MURRAY
CALIFORNIA'S
THE AGGROLITES
LOCAL SKA PUNK DUB REGGAE
ONE DROP
THURS JULY 17TH AT STEAMERS PUB:
(No Minors $10 at the door 8:30pm)
JFK & THE CONSPIRATORS
LOS FURIOS THE AFTERBEAT
THE KILTLIFTERS
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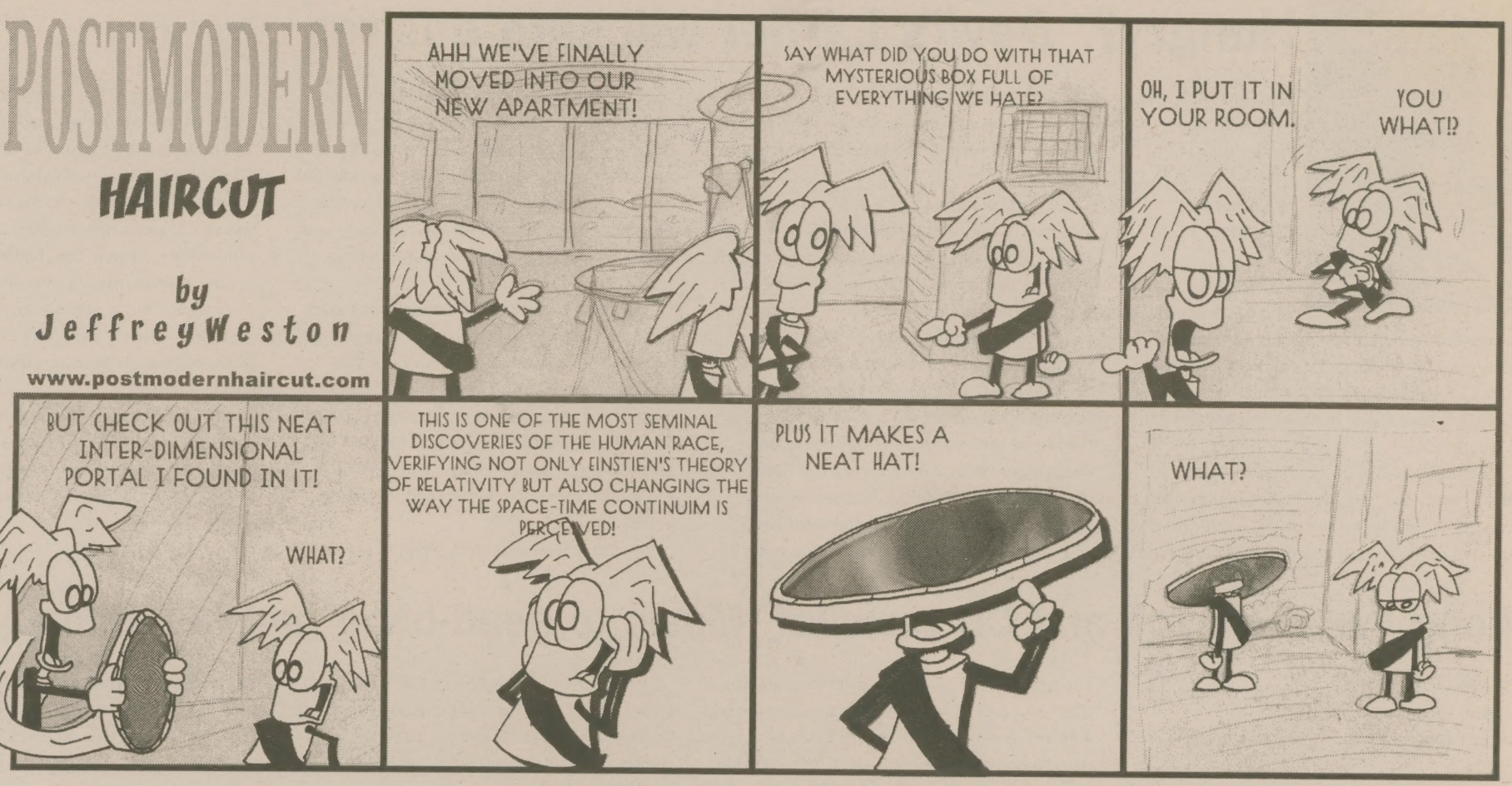
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SAY WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THAT MYSTERIOUS BOX FULL OF EVERYTHING WE HATE?
OH, I PUT IT IN YOUR ROOM.
YOU WHAT!?
BUT CHECK OUT THIS NEAT INTER-DIMENSIONAL PORTAL I FOUND IN IT!
WHAT?
THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST SEMINAL DISCOVERIES OF THE HUMAN RACE, VERIFYING NOT ONLY EINSTIEN'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY BUT ALSO CHANGING THE WAY THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUIM IS PERCEIVED!
PLUS IT MAKES A NEAT HAT!
WHAT?

Billboards

on campus

FREE SELF DEFENCE SEMINAR. The Women In Science and Engineering (WISE) Group at UVic is pleased to offer two free SELF DEFENCE seminars taking place in July, with the possibility of a third depending on interest. The class will be taught by James Tosoff from Westcoast Taekwondo, who has over 20 years of martial arts experience. The courses will be Wednesday July 16, 6-7pm, and Thursday July 17, 12-1pm. The seminars are available to everyone, regardless of experience level. Class sizes are limited to 30 participants, pre-registration is required. Seminar location available upon registration. To register, please contact Alisa at aawd@uvic.ca or call (250) 382-1174.

off campus

Pachanga Latina Presents: **Noches Latinas** every Saturday night 8pm-1am Latin Dance Party with DJ Moises & Salsa instructor Ronald Martinez workshop 8-9:30pm. Cover $8, workshop $3. Princess Mary Restuarant 358 Harbour Rd. Call 477-6051 for more information or visit www.pachangalatina.ca.

Free public lectures on spirituality by Sant Thakar Singh. Tuesday/Wednesday July 15 & 16 at 10:00 am & 7:00 pm both days. Victoria Conference Center, 720 Douglas St. Victoria, BC. All are welcome to learn meditation techniques free of charge.
For more information1-877-566-9849 or visit www.knowthyselfassoul.com

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Let the job search begin!
The Hire-a-Student office is open for the summer of 2003. We are ready to assist businesses and youth in fulfilling their summer employment needs. The Hire-a-Student office provides job postings, interview advice, resume building, casual labour, and job search strategies. Visit us at #101-3939 Quadra St. M-F, 8:30am-4:30pm or call 363-0344.

Two or three people wanted to help found a small co-operative to publish a literary tabloid. For an outline of the project, e-mail elizabethwoods@shaw.ca or phone 479-7836.

At Recreation Integration Victoria we facilitate active lifestyles for people with disabilities. We need VOLUNTEERS for both our Outdoor Explorations Program and the Disability Sailing Association. Volunteers at Recreation Integration Victoria provide one-to-one assistance for people with disabilities in a variety of great summer activities. To get involved please call Lindsay at 477-6314 ext. 15. Help someone else have the summer of a lifetime!

hey you

Natalie, you really should stay.....even if you won't wear the Santa suit.

I did ask, you know. The former dean said you won't get fired, but if the student is boasting it will affect you.

Say that you'll stay. Because, in the venerable words of Cinerama, baby, you turn me on.

For the bass player of Better Rhetoric: My'iii-bot misses you. My life is empty without the sharp tang of your witty insults about my various maladies: SARS, my weakened fist of logic, my bittersweet face.... In the cold abyss that is my existence, even the gentle bleating of the spring lambs cannot console me. When their cries turn into baa's of rage, who will be there with me to fight them off? I miss you.

Vanessa: this is your doppelganger speaking. Come to Victoria. We'll hit all the strip joints, I swear. If I promise you Madchild strapped to the bulwark of your ferry across, how soon can you be here?

I'm only gonna say this once: I DON'T smell like peas.

To my Rusker-Rusker: I know how it feels... Bad! The in-jokes will only get better from here, if we let them. ...oh why you wanna go and do me like that? come down on the street and DANCE with me!!! From: Your skronky-floor-writhing chickyboo.

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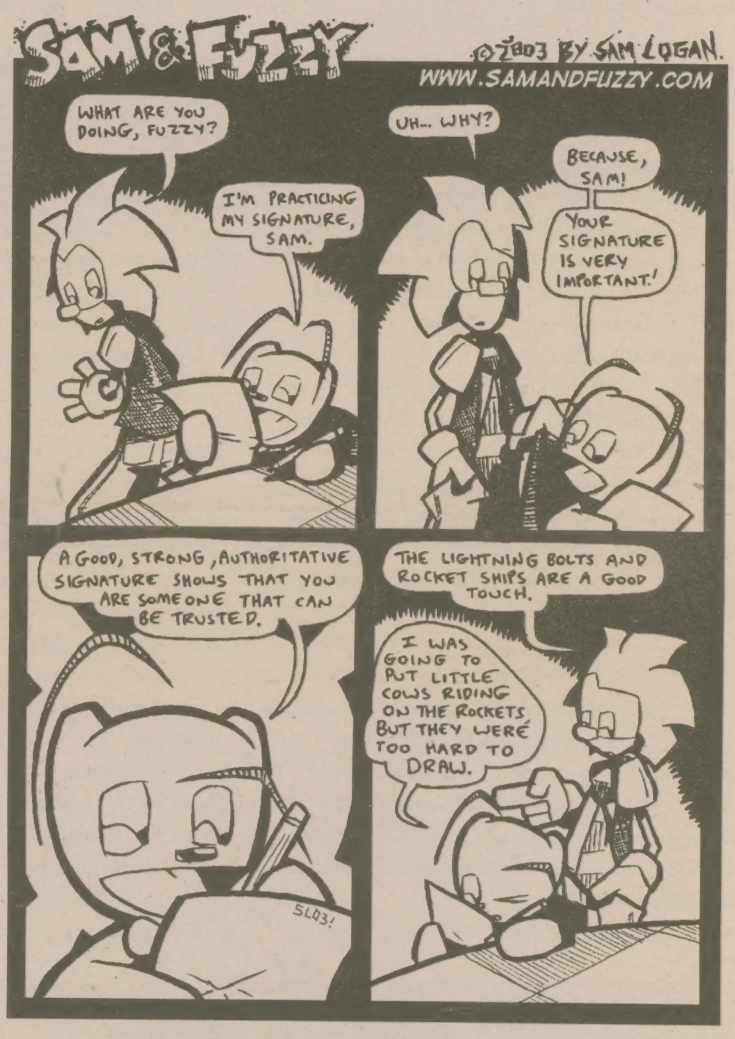
+ $2/extra line

hey you! - free


SAM & FUZZY
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WHAT ARE YOU DOING, FUZZY?
I'M PRACTICING MY SIGNATURE, SAM.
UH... WHY?
BECAUSE, SAM!
YOUR SIGNATURE IS VERY IMPORTANT!
A GOOD, STRONG, AUTHORITATIVE SIGNATURE SHOWS THAT YOU ARE SOMEONE THAT CAN BE TRUSTED.
SL03!
THE LIGHTNING BOLTS AND ROCKET SHIPS ARE A GOOD TOUCH.
I WAS GOING TO PUT LITTLE COWS RIDING ON THE ROCKETS BUT THEY WERE TOO HARD TO DRAW.

The-First-Annual-Paul-Martin-Fill-In-The-Blank-Contest!!!

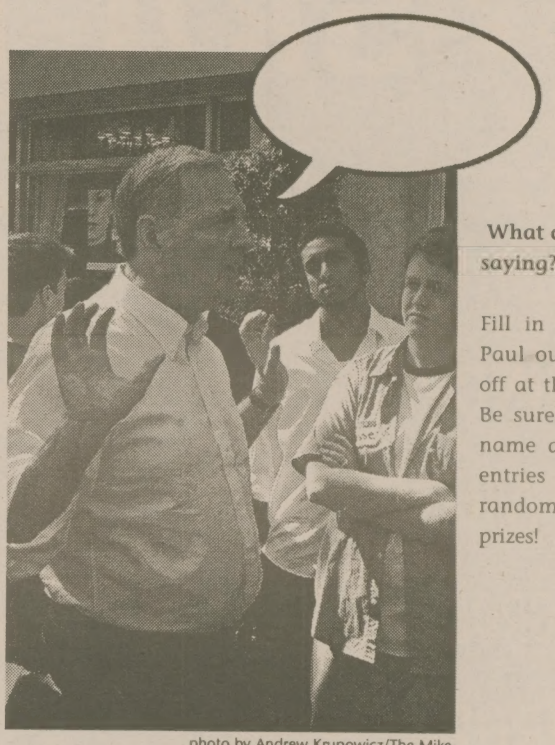

photo by Andrew Krupowicz/The Mike

What do you think he's saying?

Fill in the blanks, clip Paul out and drop him off at the Martlet office. Be sure to include your name and details—best entries will receive random and wonderful prizes!

Prime Ministeral front-runner Paul Martin gesticulates wildly outside of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto on May 21.